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# MINUTES

# OF THE

# MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

# OF THE

# WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

6 August, 1974

Meeting held in West Berlin

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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

West Berlin

6 August, 1974

PRESENT:

| | |
|---|---|
| Honorary President: | Rev. Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft |
| Presidents: | Dr (Mrs) K. T. Cho<br>Rev. Dr E. A. Payne |
| Officers: | Dr M.M. Thomas (Chairman)<br>Miss P.M. Webb (Vice-Chairman)<br>Rev. Dr P.A. Potter |
| Members: | Rev. Dr I.B. Bokeleale<br>Mr J.V. Faune<br>Mr D.E. Johnson<br>Rev. J. Langhoff<br>Professor Dr J.M. Lochman<br>Rt. Hon. Earl of March<br>Rev. Dr R.J. Marshall<br>Bishop Dr R.C. Nichols<br>His Eminence Metropolitan Nikodim<br>Rev. Dr J. Rossel<br>Archbishop K. Sarkissian<br>General T.B. Simatupang<br>Dr R. von Weizsäcker<br>Mrs J. Wesonga |
| Consultant: | Archimandrite Kirill |
| Staff: | Miss B. Bam<br>Dr A.A. Brash<br>Rev. D. Gill<br>Mr J. Hilke<br>Dr G. Hoffmann<br>Mr C.I. Itty<br>Rev. C.H. Long<br>Mr L.J. Niilus<br>Mr F. Northam<br>Dr K. Raiser<br>Dr S. Samartha<br>Dr B. Sjollema |
| Interpreters: | Mrs T. Evdokimoff<br>Miss B. Mallet<br>Mr A. Nalpanis |
| Minute Writer: | Miss A. Burrows |

APOLOGIES

Presidents: His Holiness Patriarch German
Rt. Rev. Bishop Hanns Lilje
Rev. Dr John Coventry Smith
Rt. Rev. A.H. Zulu

Vice-Chairman: His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton

Members: Pastor K. Gottschald
Professor T. Sabev

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance Sub-Committee

Rt. Hon. Earl of March (Chairman)
Mr J.V. Faune
Rev. Dr R.J. Marshall
Rev. Dr E.A. Payne
Dr R. von Weizsäcker
Mrs J. Wesonga

Priorities Sub-Committee

Bishop Dr R.C. Nichols (Chairman)
Rev. Dr I.B. Bokeleale
Mr D.E. Johnson
Rev. J. Langhoff
Professor Dr J.M. Lochman
Miss P.M. Webb

The meeting convened at 09.00 on Tuesday, 6 August, 1974. Opening worship was led by the Chairman.

1. Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll and presented apologies from His Holiness Patriarch German, Rt. Rev. Bishop Hanns Lilje, Rev. Dr John Coventry Smith, Rt. Rev. A.H. Zulu, His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton, His Eminence Metropolitan Emilianos, Pastor Karl Gottschald and Professor Todor Sabev.

2. Agenda

The proposed agenda and timetable were accepted.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held in Bad Saarow, German Democratic Republic, 18-22 February 1974, having been previously circulated, were confirmed.

4. Report of the General Secretary

The General Secretary reported on a number of events in the months since the Bad Saarow meeting.

a. Assembly preparations had included the publication of the Section dossiers and other materials and the listing of participants.

b. There had been a number of important WCC meetings: the DFI Consultation in Colombo; PCR Consultation; Humanum studies final consultation; the Joint Working Group, Venice, had considered its fourth report and recommended that SODEPAX should continue for a further three years after 1975 and that the Joint Working Group itself should definitely continue, with a number of new emphases. The General Secretary had been asked to speak at a meeting in Rome on the occasion of the Synod of Bishops in October 1974 and in their presence on the theme of the Synod, 'Evangelization in the Modern World'. There had been the Consultation on Sexism in the 70s, in Berlin; the Church and Society meeting in Bucharest in June on 'The Future of Man in Modern Technological and Science-based Society'; the CICARWS Commission, including the nomination of a Director; the Faith and Order Commission meeting in Accra; the CCIA Commission, and Familia '74 in Tanzania in July. Other meetings in which the WCC had been involved included a discussion in March with EECC of issues of development and the moral and ethical implications of change; the AACC Assembly in May; the Council of the German Evangelical Church, which had held its regular meeting in Geneva and discussed common concerns with

the WCC; and the visit to Geneva of a group of pastors from the Church of Württemberg. Of the Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization in July, to which the WCC had been invited to send five participants, about 65% of participants belonged to WCC member churches and there had been many visits and meetings in Lausanne and Geneva. The Covenant produced by the Congress was a significant document.

c. With regard to the life of the WCC as a whole, the General Secretary reported that Dr Brash had taken up correspondence with member churches and councils in an effort to improve communication with them. The new Middle East Council of Churches, constituted in May, included Orthodox and Oriental churches as well as Protestant. Preparations were under way for a meeting of WCC staff with churches and councils in Latin America in October. Dr Raiser had continued his work on programme coordination and planning, including the 'Uppsala to Jakarta' report, the Assembly Work Book, and programme priorities. The new salary structure was now working. Dr Potter referred also to the problems caused by the world monetary situation.

d. Finally the General Secretary spoke of the WCC's involvement in various current affairs. The Task Force on the Middle East and Jerusalem had continued its work with all groups concerned. A meeting on the Chile situation had been held in Peru with representatives from all over Latin America. The Officers had produced a statement on Portugal and its relations with Africa. Mr Bouman and Mr Mackie had visited church leaders in Portugal in June. CCIA had produced a statement on the situation in South Korea and the Philippines where many church and student leaders had been arrested. The staff group studying the world food crisis had produced a paper on 'Threats to Survival'. The WCC had been very concerned about the situation in Cyprus and the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In a brief discussion, Mr Hoffmann gave more information about the main emphases of the Lausanne Congress on Evangelization. There had been an open attitude to the World Council in official addresses. Dr Brash reported on two visits made to the WCC in the absence of the General Secretary: the Minister of Church Affairs of Hungary had discussed questions of human rights; representatives of the North Korean Mission to the UN had brought letters to the General Secretary from the Christian Federation of Churches in North Korea. Dr Rossel said he had seen a report of these letters in a South Korean newspaper of 28 February. They had been used against South Korean Christians and he urged caution in this matter. Dr Raiser reported on the meeting between the WCC and the Christian Peace Conference. The CPC delegation, led by Dr Karoly Toth, had included representatives of both Eastern and Western countries. Discussion had focused on questions of human rights; war, peace and disarmament; the struggle against racism, and the beginning of theological debate. A letter had been received listing important points on which the conversation could be continued.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented the draft of his report to Central Committee for comments.

6. Arrangements for Central Committee

a. Programme: Dr Raiser said that no changes were proposed in the agenda as circulated. He drew attention to a number of receptions being arranged by church and state authorities.

b. Sub-Committees: Dr Raiser presented a proposal for the appointment of Central Committee participants to sub-committees, which was approved. The following sub-committee agendas were noted:

Reference Committee I:
i. Matters relating to Unit I
ii. Report on church unity, including relationships to the Roman Catholic Church and to Orthodox Churches
iii. Relationships to Conservative Evangelical groups and churches

Reference Committee II:
i. Matters relating to Unit II
ii. Public pronouncements

Reference Committee III:
i. Matters relating to Unit III
ii. Biblical and Humanum studies
iii. Ecumenical Institute
iv. Constitution and Rules

Reference Committee IV:
i. Reports of Chairman and General Secretary
ii. Matters relating to the Department of Communication
iii. Participation in the Assembly: delegations and 15% nominations
iv. New York Office
v. Relationships with member churches and national and regional councils
vi. Applications for membership

Assembly Committee: i. Programme
ii. Arrangements

Nomination and Staffing Committee

Finance Committee

Priorities Committee

c. Worship: Dr Raiser said that worship had been prepared in close contact with the Preparatory Committee in Berlin. The opening service would be a Communion Service. There would be one worship event (prayers, Bible study, etc.) in plenary each day. On 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, there would be celebrations of the Orthodox Liturgy and Roman Catholic Mass. He explained it was the first

time that a Roman Catholic Mass had appeared on the programme of the Central Committee. This provision had been made following the explicit request by the local ecumenical Preparatory Committee in Berlin. The Roman Catholic Church, which participates in the work of the local Ecumenical Council, had asked through the local Preparatory Committee to be given the opportunity to invite the participants in the Central Committee meeting to a celebration of the Mass. The present arrangement was thus a special occasion and must not be regarded as a precedent for the future. It was AGREED that the matter should in some form be made clear to Central Committee.

## 7. Changes in the Constitution and Rules of the WCC

Dr Brash presented staff proposals for certain changes in the WCC Constitution and Rules, stressing that at the moment these dealt only with the English text. It was AGREED to refer the proposals to Reference Committee III.

## 8. Applications for Membership

a. It was AGREED to recommend to the Central Committee that the Church of Sangir Talaud, Indonesia, be received into full membership of the WCC provided that in the next six months objection is not received from more than one-third of the member churches.

b. It was AGREED to recommend to the Central Committee that the National Council of Community Churches, USA, be received into full membership of the WCC provided that in the next six months objection is not received from more than one-third of the member churches.

c. It was AGREED to recommend to the Central Committee that the Huria Kristen Indonesia, the Church of Sangir Talaud, and the National Council of Community Churches, USA, be allocated one delegate each to the Fifth Assembly, subject to their formal acceptance into membership; and that the Eglise Protestante d'Algérie be allocated one fraternal delegate, subject to its formal acceptance as an associate member church.

## 9. Assembly Preparations

### a. Participants

Dr Brash introduced a document on participants at the Fifth Assembly and reported on member churches which have not appointed their delegations in accordance with the Addis Ababa rules. He explained that the process of appointment of the 15% of delegates could not be completed because not all other delegates had yet been appointed. He hoped that the Central Committee would allow the number of Advisers to be increased

from 100 to 120, on the understandings that (i) there would be better representation of Conservative Evangelical elements within member churches; (ii) some Roman Catholic advisers would be included, and the number of Roman Catholic Delegated Observers reduced from 25 to 15. Some names could be recommended to Central Committee but the whole process could not yet be completed. He suggested that the matter be referred to Reference Committee IV for Central Committee action. This was AGREED.

b. 'From Uppsala to Jakarta'

Dr Raiser reported on the drafts being compiled. Mr Johnson had accepted responsibility to be coordinator of the report, which would appear in three languages. He would be responsible for the overall editing, particularly of the English edition; Professor Mehl would edit the French edition and Pastor Groscurth the German.

At a later stage of the meeting, on the recommendation of the Priorities Sub-Committee, it was AGREED to recommend to Central Committee that an Editorial Task Force be appointed as follows: Mr Johnson (chairman), Fr Borovoy, Pastor Groscurth, Professor Lochman, Professor Mehl and Mrs Wesonga.

c. Location of the Fifth Assembly

The General Secretary reviewed the history of the World Council's response to the invitation of the churches and government of Indonesia, up to and including his visit to Jakarta in June 1974. Based on his report, the Officers had agreed to recommend that the intention to hold the Assembly in Jakarta be reaffirmed. However there were now major changes in the situation.

General Simatupang reported on the situation that had developed in Indonesia. He stressed that the government and churches still maintained the invitation, but pointed out some substantial problems in the whole position.

After some discussion, a statement was drafted by a sub-committee consisting of General Simatupang, Dr Visser 't Hooft and Dr Rossel which, when slightly amended, was ADOPTED as follows:

1. The Executive Committee was authorized by the Central Committee (Addis Ababa, 1971) to determine the site for the 1975 Fifth Assembly. Meeting in Sofia in September 1971, it considered a number of possible locations and decided to accept an invitation from the churches of Indonesia to hold the Assembly in Jakarta. This choice was ratified subsequently by the Central Committee (Utrecht, 1972).

2. Since then, and particularly during the first seven months of 1974, the Indonesian churches in cooperation with WCC staff have been deeply engaged in preparing for

next year's event. Problems concerning meeting places, accommodation and daily scheduling have been considered and, in the main, solved. Assurances regarding freedom of speech and freedom of entry were, as requested by the last meeting of the Central Committee, sought and received.

3. An important point in these preparations was the visit of the WCC General Secretary to Indonesia, June 11-13, where he took part in an Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Council of Churches in Indonesia and met with senior representatives of the government. During these discussions, the host churches reconfirmed their invitation to the WCC, the Indonesian government restated its willingness to extend the nation's hospitality to the Fifth Assembly, and it became clear that there were no formal obstacles to holding the 1975 gathering in Jakarta.

4. There is, however, one consideration which must now be weighed very carefully by the Central Committee. It concerns the overall purpose of the Assembly itself. Our hope has always been that the Jakarta gathering like other World Council Assemblies would be of benefit not only to the WCC and its member churches, but also to the churches and people of the host country. In recent weeks there have been signs that the Assembly unintentionally could create problems for the nation and the churches and specifically for relations between Christians and Muslims. The Committee notes that while the Indonesian government has maintained its agreement with the holding of the Assembly in Jakarta, government spokesmen have recently referred to the possibility that a world Christian assembly might have an unfavourable impact on national unity. Misgivings about the WCC Assembly which have been expressed by some sections of the Indonesian community are, we are convinced, based on misunderstandings about the nature and purpose of the ecumenical movement. For it is the policy of the World Council of Churches to work for constructive relations with people of other faiths in the common service of mankind. But the misgivings are there, and they raise very sharply the question whether the World Council would be acting responsibly were it to meet in Indonesia at this time.

5. In the light of these considerations, and after full discussion with representatives of the Indonesian churches, the Executive Committee proposes that the Central Committee

- record its gratitude to the churches, government and people of Indonesia for their willingness to extend hospitality to an Assembly of the World Council of Churches;

- decide with deep regret not to make use of this invivation in 1975, but instead seek an alternative location for the Fifth Assembly;

- express its hope that the World Council of Churches, on some future occasion, may be able to enjoy the hospitality of the Indonesian churches and people.

* * *

Some discussion took place on alternative arrangements. On the understanding that the matter would have to be cleared with the Swiss churches, it was AGREED to recommend to Central Committee that the Assembly be held in Geneva, beginning approximately 23 November, 1975.

At a later session held on 14 August, the General Secretary reviewed the various discussions which had taken place about the location of the Assembly, and some of the issues raised. When the Executive had discussed the question at its meeting on 6 August, the only alternative to Jakarta in view had been Geneva. The Finance Committee had tried to revise the budget with a view to moving to Geneva and thought this would save $312,000 provided a further $100,000 was raised by member churches. The matter had also been discussed in the Reference Committee, where there was a strong reaction against meeting in Geneva, and in Europe in general. A move to Geneva could be justified only on practical grounds as this location would not contribute to the Assembly as originally conceived in terms of a celebration and the character of the Assembly as set out in its theme, sections, etc.

Among alternatives considered was a plea to go to Ottawa, and the offer of Notre Dame University, Indiana, USA. Pastor Langhoff had suggested Aarhus, which would be available in July/August. Then Canon Carr has proposed Nairobi. It was felt that it would be better to meet in the Third World. Africa would have been the natural place to choose originally if a suitable meeting place had been available. The Kenyatta Conference Centre, which has all the necessary facilities, was now open; a cable had been received from Kenya saying that the member churches would welcome a meeting of the Assembly in Nairobi and would be sending a firm invitation; President Kenyatta had expressed his personal welcome and there was also enthusiastic support from the AACC. The University would be available in December, and possibly before the end of November.

The Officers had asked for a staff opinion and the question had been fully discussed. It was recognized that an Assembly in Nairobi in 15 months' time would mean a great deal of work for both the NCCK and Geneva staff, and staff was very aware of the financial problems of adding another $200,000 to the cost in Geneva. But since it had been said that finance should not dictate the decision about Jakarta, it should not do so for Nairobi. The General Secretary had been asked to convey the staff feeling that Nairobi was the most attractive place we could choose.

Lord March reported that the Finance Committee had had some difficulties, but provided the estimates prepared were reasonable it should be possible financially to go to Nairobi, and it would cost about $100,000 less than Indonesia.

There was considerable discussion of both finance and timing.

The General Secretary pointed to a number of dilemmas involved

in the decision. The member churches were not very enthusiastic about going to Geneva, but were also concerned about the WCC's financial situation. Practical preparations would in many ways be easier there. On the other hand, Nairobi had many advantages, though the dates might raise problems, particularly since more lay people than ever before would be attending and some churches might have to make new nominations. On balance, however, he felt that Nairobi would provide the most compensations.

The Executive Committee AGREED on a unanimous vote to recommend that:

a) the invitation of the churches in Kenya be accepted and that the Assembly be held in Nairobi, provided satisfactory agreement can be reached regarding the dates and arrangements;

b) the Officers be empowered to take final action about the location and dates in the immediate future;

c) in the event of any serious difficulties regarding the location, the Officers consult the Executive Committee about alternatives and take action with their approval.

d. Assembly Nominations Committee

Dr Brash presented a paper explaining the functioning of the Assembly Nominations Committee as set out in the revised Constitution and Rules and outlining earlier procedures. He proposed that a Committee on the Preparation of Nominations be appointed. On the recommendation of the General Secretary, it was unanimously AGREED that Dr Robert Marshall should be chairman of the proposed committee. After further discussion, it was AGREED that the other members of the committee be named for recommendation to the Central Committee by the following: Miss Webb, Metropolitan Nikodim, Dr Bokeleale, Dr Marshall and Dr Brash.

At a later stage this group proposed, and it was AGREED to recommend to Central Committee, that the Committee on the Preparation of Nominations be: Dr Robert Marshall, chairman, (Lutheran Church in America), Mrs Joan Anderson (Presbyterian Church of New Zealand), Professor A.M. Barkat (Church of Pakistan), President Hild (United Church, Federal Republic of Germany), Pastor Jean Kotto (Evangelical Church of Cameroun), Miss Carmen Lusan (Methodist, Caribbean) and Archbishop Vladimir (Russian Orthodox Church).

10. Report of the Priorities Sub-Committee

Bishop Nichols presented the report. The committee had reaffirmed its principles of priorities: the maintenance of the present staff, adequate provision for the Assembly, and providing adequate funds for third world participation in all

activities of the WCC. The committee had agreed that these guidelines should stand until the next Assembly.

The committee had considered the report of the Staff Group on Programme Coordination and Planning. It welcomed the suggestion for the new division of Central Committee into four Reference Committees, Staffing, Priorities, Assembly, and Finance Committees. The report was fully examined and a number of questions raised. The committee in general approved the suggestions and encouraged their further development, and commended the report for further discussion to the Priorities Committee of Central Committee.

The committee had commented on the proposals for a new WCC magazine and asked that its position vis-à-vis other publications be clarified. It was hoped that it would merge existing publications rather than be supplementary to them. The committee asked that the magazine's title be reconsidered to represent more fully the concern of the ecumenical movement.

The Executive Committee AGREED to refer the Report on Programme Coordination to the Priorities Committee of Central Committee for further discussion.

11. Report of Finance Sub-Committee

Lord March made the following points:

a. Assembly: We still do not have the assurance of sufficient funds, but although there is a gap, possibly serious, it would not be irresponsible to go ahead with the Assembly on financial grounds, either to Jakarta or Geneva. The gap is obviously less for Geneva than for Jakarta: $250,000 would be saved in going to Geneva.

b. 1973: There was a small surplus in 1973 of SFr. 150,000.

c. 1974: There should be sufficient income, if we include the special Russian contribution, to finance the General Budget operation for 1974.

d. 1975: The estimated deficit at the present time for 1975 is SFr. 1,000,000. At that time the Special Reserve will amount to SFr. 700,000. If that Special Reserve is used in 1975, it is reasonable to assume that the Central Committee will probably not hand a deficit on to its successor, which is an act we must avoid.

e. 1976: If inflation continues at present levels, and even if contributions are raised by 50% by all member churches except USA and Germany (which seems very unlikely) there would be a shortfall of income in 1976 of SFr. 750,000. The General Reserve is now worth only SFr. 1,000,000, so the expected deficit in 1976 would virtually wipe out the General Reserve.

f. Conclusion: To sum up, in a somewhat miraculous way we have been able year by year, indeed every year since 1966, to keep going by ad hoc and special efforts. However, we surely cannot go on year after year like this. As we look forward, the third year ahead always appears the most serious and each time more so than the last. It looks now as if 1976 could be a very serious year in this respect and we must plan now with that in view.

12. Letter to Presidents from Rhodesian Bishops

Dr Payne reported that the Rhodesian bishops had addressed a second letter to the WCC Presidents protesting about support to liberation movements. Dr Potter said that he had acknowledged the letter, pointing out that it is not the function of the Presidents to deal with such matters on behalf of the World Council.

13. Next Meeting of the Executive Committee

The dates of the next meeting of the Executive Committee were reconsidered. It was AGREED to hold the meeting on 14-18 April, in Geneva or at another location if the Officers so decide.